

Procedures and guidelines for the installation of all STOP signs

All Stop signs must comply with the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD), which itself must also conform to national standards. Using the guidelines found in this manual, an investigation is conducted which determines whether the placement of a STOP sign is justified. The following are some of the steps taken to ensure STOP signs are installed correctly.

- 1.** First a history of the intersection in question is reviewed. This includes reviewing prior investigations and accident data to determine if a STOP sign is justified.
- 2.** A field investigation is also performed to check the visibility, street layout, and general surroundings of the site.
- 3.** If it is necessary, a count of all vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists is conducted for the intersection of concern on an average day. The results of the count are then reviewed and compared to the minimum requirements allowed by the TMUTCD for multiway STOP signs.
- 4.** Once it has been determined that the installation of a STOP sign is justified and the City Engineer approves, the Street Department is instructed to install the sign.



City of El Paso

**Engineering Department,
Traffic Division
2 Civic Center Plaza – 6th Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901-1196
(915) 541 - 4050**



**ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT
TRAFFIC DIVISION**

Information Brochure

Stop Signs



AHEAD

STOP

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*City of
El Paso
Texas*

Stop Signs

STOP Signs and other traffic signs on City roadways are handled through the Engineering Department, Traffic Division at 541-4050.

STOP signs in particular, are signs whose function are often misunderstood by the public. This brochure provides a brief summary on some of the standards and procedures pertaining to STOP signs that will hopefully clarify any misunderstandings.

What is a STOP sign's function and what other signs are used with STOP signs?

A STOP sign is a sign used to direct motorists to stop at the spot where a STOP sign is located. The purpose of a STOP sign is to provide safe and orderly operation of an intersection that is otherwise not possible without the use of one or more STOP signs. It is octagonal in shape with white lettering and a red background. These signs are found on the right side of the roadway and sometimes on medians to increase visibility. When more than two directions are controlled by STOP signs, then a supplemental plaque, such as a 4-WAY plaque or an ALL WAY plaque are used to inform motorists of the type of traffic control that exist at that intersection. Also, if a STOP sign is in its correct location and it cannot be seen very well because of hills or curves, a Stop Ahead sign is installed in advance of the STOP sign.



Will more stop signs slow traffic on our streets?

Each year, the City receives many requests for STOP signs as a way to reduce speeding. However, research shows that when STOP signs are used incorrectly, such as for the sole purpose of reducing speeding, the number of intentional violations rises. Studies show that the speed of vehicles in the immediate area of the STOP sign is reduced, but the speed between intersections increases as a result of motorists making up for lost time. In time these STOP signs become an annoyance to motorists causing motorists to disregard them, and usually develop disrespect for all traffic signs. Also, research shows that other measures, such as police involvement and traffic calming for residential streets have proven to be more effective in reducing speeding than STOP signs.

Most drivers are reasonable, but when they are confronted with what they think are unreasonable and unnecessary restrictions, they are more likely to ignore them. This is why STOP signs are installed at intersections only after a careful engineering investigation and study has been performed and the results prove that a STOP sign is required and justified.

Is having a STOP sign always better than no STOP sign?

STOP signs that are not needed can create more problems than they solve. STOP signs create a false sense of security that reduces a person's awareness. This becomes a problem when motorists decide not to stop because they believe a particular STOP sign to be pointless and at the same time pedestrians unwittingly cross into on coming traffic because they believe that a STOP sign makes it safe to cross the street. This is why it is usually better to allow drivers to enter an intersection cautiously without the perceived security of a STOP sign, than to install a STOP sign incorrectly as a cure-all problem solver.

Are four-way STOPs better than two-way STOPs?

Four-way stops, in most cases are only useful when traffic volumes are high and approximately equal on all four approaches. Otherwise, the street carrying the lowest volume of traffic is usually stopped.

How can I get a STOP sign installed?

A phone call or written request is all that is needed to get STOP sign information. Please contact the Traffic Division at 541-4050 or write to:

**Engineering Dept., Traffic Division
City of El Paso
Two Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, TX 79901-1196
Phone # (915) 541-4050**

When you call or write, please identify the name of the intersection or street location of concern and any additional information you feel is appropriate. After the request has been received, an engineering study and a field investigation are performed to determine if a STOP sign is indeed needed. Your daytime telephone number is also needed so that the Traffic Engineering staff can contact you with the outcome of the evaluation.

What are some of the conditions that justify the use of a STOP sign?

1. At an intersection where a less important road intersects a main road and the normal right-of-way rule would not provide reasonably safe operation.
2. At a street entering a highway or major through street.
3. At an unsignalized intersection in a signalized area.
4. Where inadequate gaps in traffic, restricted view, or crash records indicate a need for a STOP sign.

What should I do if I see a STOP sign obstructed by an object?

If a STOP sign is not visible to the driver, then it cannot perform its function and an unsafe situation arises. Please report all obstructions or other perceived safety hazards immediately to the Traffic Division at 541-4050 or Street Department at 621-6861.

